

Swamp Tortoise attacking Birds.—On December 2, 1958, while at the South Perth Zoological Gardens at 10 a.m., I noticed a commotion in the Flamingo Pond. This is a body of turbid water about one foot in depth. Close inspection showed that two Swamp Tortoises (*Chelodina oblonga*) were feeding on a dead pigeon. The bird had apparently been freshly killed that morning. Both tortoises were large ones, being near the upper range of the sizes I have encountered, the carapace being about six inches in length. (These pigeons are of the domestic variety, *Columba livia*, which are now feral; they feed on the grain laid out for the zoo animals.)

Some two months previously one of the attendants noted a pigeon fluttering on the surface of the water and went to its rescue thinking it had fallen in the water. However, on trying to lift the bird from the water the attendant found a tortoise had it firmly gripped by the neck. The wound made was of such severity the bird had to be destroyed.

Although both these observations were made under the special conditions of a zoological gardens, both pigeon and tortoise live very close to natural conditions. It would appear, therefore, that these reptiles could be an important predator on all water-frequenting birds small enough to be killed by them (cf. J. R. Ford, *W.A. Nat.*, 5: 44).

—V. N. SERVENTY, Subiaco.

Black Kites at Carnarvon in 1940.—In Western Australia the Black Kite (*Milvus migrans*) is regularly resident in the Kimberley Division. In dry years it has frequently appeared in the North-West, but prior to the 1952 penetration of the South-West, it was unrecorded from coastal areas south of Point Cloates (*W.A. Nat.*, 3: 146). However, there was at least one occasion when the birds came some distance further south.

A few years ago Mr. H. Stehn (then of Mandurah) informed the writer that numbers of the kites arrived in Carnarvon in 1940 immediately after the January floods. They flew around in flocks of about a dozen, but only remained in the vicinity of the town for a week.

Later I searched the *Northern Times* (January to April issues of that year). Though no reference was found to these or other hawks, there was abundant confirmation of the meteorological data given me by Mr Stehn. Carnarvon (and the Murchison and Gascoyne districts generally) had suffered their worst drought ever, a succession of five dry years resulting in great losses of stock and the dying of scrub. The drought was broken by heavy rains in January 1940, which brought the Gascoyne down in flood towards the end of the month.

—G. M. STORR, Nedlands.

The Australian Pratincole in the North-West.—The Australian Pratincole (*Stiltia isabella*) is recorded by Serventy and Whittell (*Birds of Western Australia*, 1951) as not occurring south of the Kimberley Division of Western Australia. The species ranges over a large part of northern, eastern and central Australia, and has